

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 245

Recognizing the life and accomplishments of Simon Wiesenthal.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2005

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. REID, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. DODD, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. SMITH, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BURR, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. TALENT, Mr. CONRAD, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. LEAHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the life and accomplishments of Simon
Wiesenthal.

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal was born on December 31, 1908,
to Jewish merchants in Buczacz, in what is now the Lvov
Oblast section of the Ukraine;

Whereas after he was denied admission to the Polytechnic In-
stitute in Lvov because of quota restrictions on Jewish
students, Simon Wiesenthal received his degree in engi-
neering from the Technical University of Prague in 1932;

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal worked in an architectural office until he was forced to close his business and become a mechanic in a bedspring factory, following the Russian army's occupation of Lvov and purge of Jewish professionals;

Whereas following the German occupation of Ukraine in 1941, Simon Wiesenthal was initially detained in the Janwska concentration camp near Lvov, after which he and his wife were assigned to the forced labor camp serving the Ostbahn Works, which was the repair shop for Lvov's Eastern Railroad;

Whereas in August of 1942, Simon Wiesenthal's mother was sent to the Belzec death camp as part of Nazi Germany's "Final Solution", and by the end of the next month 89 of his relatives had been killed;

Whereas with the help of the Polish Underground Simon Wiesenthal was able to help his wife escape the Ostbahn camp in 1942, and in 1943 was himself able to escape just before German guards began executing inmates, but he was recaptured the following year and sent to the Janwska camp;

Whereas following the collapse of the German eastern front, the SS guards at Janwska took Simon Wiesenthal and the remaining camp survivors and joined the westward retreat from approaching Russian forces;

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal was 1 of the few survivors of the retreat to Mauthausen, Austria and was on the brink of death, weighing only 99 pounds, when Mauthausen was liberated by American forces on May 5, 1945;

Whereas after surviving 12 Nazi prison camps, including 5 death camps, Wiesenthal chose not to return to his pre-

vious occupation, and instead dedicated himself to finding Nazi war criminals and bringing them to justice;

Whereas following the liberation of Mauthausen, Simon Wiesenthal began collecting evidence of Nazi activity for the War Crimes Section of the United States Army, and after the war continued these efforts for the Army's Office of Strategic Services and Counter-Intelligence Corps;

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal would also go on to head the Jewish Central Committee of the United States Zone of Austria, a relief and welfare organization;

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal and his wife were reunited in 1945, and had a daughter the next year;

Whereas the evidence supplied by Wiesenthal was utilized in the United States Zone war crime trials;

Whereas, after concluding his work with the United States Army in 1947, Simon Wiesenthal and others opened and operated the Jewish Historical Documentation Center in Linz, Austria, for the purpose of assembling evidence for future Nazi trials, before closing the office and providing its files to the Yad Vashem Archives in Israel in 1954;

Whereas despite his heavy involvement in relief work and occupational education for Soviet refugees, Simon Wiesenthal tenaciously continued his pursuit of Adolf Eichmann, who had served as the head of the Gestapo's Jewish Department and supervised the implementation of the "Final Solution";

Whereas in 1953, Simon Wiesenthal acquired evidence that Adolf Eichmann was living in Argentina and passed this information to the Government of Israel;

Whereas this information, coupled with information about Eichmann's whereabouts in Argentina provided to Israel

by Germany in 1959, led to Eichmann's capture by Israeli agents, trial and conviction in Israel, and execution on May 31, 1961;

Whereas following Eichmann's capture, Wiesenthal opened a new Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, Austria, for the purpose of collecting and analyzing information to aid in the location and apprehension of war criminals;

Whereas Karl Silberbauer, the Gestapo officer who arrested Anne Frank, Franz Stangl, the commandant of the Treblinka and Sobibor concentration camps in Poland, and Hermine Braunsteiner, who had supervised the killings of several hundred children at Majdanek, are among the approximately 1,100 war criminals found and brought to justice as a result of Simon Wiesenthal's investigative, analytical, and undercover operations;

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal bravely forged ahead with his mission of promoting tolerance and justice in the face of danger and resistance, including numerous threats and the bombing of his home in 1982;

Whereas the Simon Wiesenthal Center was established in 1977, to focus on the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, commemorate the events of the Holocaust, teach tolerance education, and promote Middle East affairs;

Whereas the Simon Wiesenthal Center monitors and combats the growth of neo-Nazi activity in Europe and keeps watch over concentration camp sites to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust and the sanctity of those sites are preserved;

Whereas the Simon Wiesenthal Center played a pivotal role in convincing foreign governments to pass laws enabling the prosecution of Nazi war criminals;

Whereas throughout his lifetime, Simon Wiesenthal has had many honors and awards bestowed upon him, including decorations from the Austrian and French resistance movements, the Dutch Freedom Medal, the Luxembourg Freedom Medal, the United Nations League for the Help of Refugees Award, the French Legion of Honor, and the United States Congressional Gold Medal, which was presented to him by President James Carter in 1980;

Whereas President Ronald W. Reagan once remarked, “For what Simon Wiesenthal represents are the animating principles of Western civilization since the day Moses came down from Sinai: the idea of justice, the idea of laws, the idea of the free will.”;

Whereas President George H. W. Bush has stated that Simon Wiesenthal, “is our living embodiment of remembrance. The two pledges of Simon Wiesenthal’s life inspire us all—‘Never forget’ and ‘Never again’.”;

Whereas President William Clinton has remarked of Simon Wiesenthal, “To those who know his story, one of miraculous survival and of relentless pursuit of justice, the answer is apparent. From the unimaginable horrors of the Holocaust, only a few voices survived, to bear witness, to hold the guilty accountable, to honor the memory of those who were killed. Only if we heed these brave voices can we build a bulwark of humanity against the hatred and indifference that is still all too prevalent in this world of ours.”; and

Whereas, at the end of a life dedicated to the pursuit of justice and advocacy for victims of the Holocaust, Simon Wiesenthal passed away on September 20, 2005, at the age of 96: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses its most sincere condolences to
3 the family and friends of Simon Wiesenthal;

4 (2) recognizes the life and accomplishments of
5 Simon Wiesenthal, who, after surviving the Holo-
6 caust, spent more than 50 years helping to bring
7 Nazi war criminals to justice and was a vigorous op-
8 ponent of anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, and racism;
9 and

10 (3) recognizes and commends Simon
11 Wiesenthal's legacy of promoting tolerance, his tire-
12 less efforts to bring about justice, and the con-
13 tinuing pursuit of these ideals.

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